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ABSTRACT

The field of international and development education has become dependent on theory and requires new and more effective principles and methods to move from the theoretical to the practical. Being concerned with choice and action--its methods leading to defensible decisions--international education contrasts with comparative education, which is more concerned with knowledge leading to warranted conclusions. Emerging from the research is agreement that comparative education can contribute to the understanding of education and its planned development, even if comparative education as a scientific field of inquiry remains an open question. More attention should be given to th academic base of comparative education, focusing on mutually interdependent development of conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and data bases that may be directed toward a range of issues and activities. The future of the Comparative and International Education Society will determine the future of comparative and international education. (Author/DW)

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COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS? AN OPTIMISTIC NOTE

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COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS? AN OPTIMISTIC NOTE

"Nullum est jam dictum quod non dictum sit pruis."

This paper is concerned with the future of comparative and international education, especially in the light of the apparent weaknesses of some aspects of the field which appear to have very tenuous foundations because of the manner in which they have developed. In this context an implicit distinction is drawn between the U. S. and European schools of thought throughout the discussion, and it is proposed that the way ahead clearly lies in an increasingly comparative emphasis and the choice of appropriate methodologies and problems for analysis.

Many scholars have recently argued or implied that the future of comparative and international education hangs in the balance (Brembeck, 1973; Butts, 1973; Kazamias, 1972; Laska, 1973; Noah and Eckstein, 1969:117-8) and, with a few notable exceptions (Holmes, 1972; Husen, 1974; Noah, 1974), the tone of the arguments has tended toward pessimism. Conversations with comparativists who are concerned about the depressed academic job market and shrinking research resources in the U. S., in addition to global uncertainties and deteriorating domestic confidence which have eroded internationalist sympathies, do not brighten the picture. It seems clear, however, that the phenomenon we have to fear most is the self-fulfilling prophecy. Admittedly we have some deep problems to sort out and some areas of debilitating controversy to channel into more constructive concerns, but we also have a lot going for us. My plea is to do as the old song advises: "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative."

If a visitor to the United States may be permitted to engage in the sort of conjectural and intuitive analysis which should not characterize comparative and international studies, I would reflect that in comparative perspective perhaps the development of the field in the U.S.A. has suffered in some ways from a peculiarly instrumental and opportunistic orientation which has channelled much professional activity into a "service function"--solicited by educators of course--which has been largely at the discretion of such agencies as A.I.D., U.S.O.E., Ford, Carnegie, A.C.E., the World Bank and various U.N. bodies. It is this service function which now "defines" international (as distinct from comparative) education in the context of the universalization of Western schooling and characterizes it largely in terms of the efforts of educational planners, and which must in turn be viewed at least in large part in the post-colonial era as an outgrowth of U.S. foreign policy.[1] Since the early 1960s, especially, a potentially very fruitful scholarly field has been subject--both directly and indirectly--to the whims of the trans-national political marketplace, possibly at the expense of the consolidation of a home in the academic marketplace, which is what many scholars are now understandably anxious about.

It is not my concern to denounce "America the benevolent." It seems that most informed Americans themselves no longer see the U.S. as benign and selfless, as "anti-war, anti-imperia-ist, anti-colonialist" (Lens, 1972),

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[1] Perusal of back copies of Front Lines, the fortnightly newspaper of the Agency for International Development (Washington, D.C.), or International Action, newsletter of the International Education Project of the American Council on Education, leaves this writer in little doubt as to the validity of this statement. While it may be argued that there is insufficient "empirical" evidence to support such a claim, it nevertheless seems clear that a progressive normative conception of what the field is about has been influenced and perpetuated in this way.

respectful of the rights of other states, and driven to interference only out of considerations of the highest principle. If Carnoy (1974) demonstrates that traditionally schooling was carried out in the context of imperialism and colonialism and that "it cannot in its present form and purpose be separated from that context" (p. 15), his analysis also indicates that today the overtones of cultural imperialism in the work many of us do are becoming more disturbing than ever before.[2] And the analysis does not rely on a Marxist base: Coombs (1964) adds education, in which he includes 'propaganda', technical assistance and student exchanges, to the economic, diplomatic and military aspects to create what he calls the "fourth dimension of foreign policy." Smart (1971:449-455) in turn clearly demonstrates the way in which education has become an international political power-base in many Third World countries; and the analysis is supported in different ways by observers from many disciplines (Ambrose, 1971; Carnoy, 1974; Chomsky, 1969; Coombs, 1964; Etzioni, 1971; Illchman, et. al., 1968; Lens, 1972; Roy, 1973). The way in which some agencies have often unknowingly provided operatives for C.I.A. and other "security" activities of a shadowy nature (Agee, 1975; Blackstock, 1964; Chomsky, 1973; Knorr, 1964; Marchetti, 1974; McGarvey, 1972; Wise, 1964) provides further grist for a troubled mill. I am not here attempting to impute motive: I do not support the Leninist view that the nature of the American economy has necessarily doomed the United States to a course of global aggression. Rather, I would speculate with Schlessinger (1973) that the basic cause of imperialism lies in the disparity of power between the political and the technological dynamism of an "advanced" country and the weakness of the "underdeveloped"

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[2] This concern is superbly demonstrated in an exchange of spirited satirical memoranda between Ed Puttick and Roger Brindle, Berkeley Department of Education, P.I.E.F., February 19-21, 1974 (mimeo).

country, probably regardless of the system of ownership in the aggressive state. It seems likely that the immediate motives for U.S. adventures in expansion have almost always been strategic or political--in particular the preemptive impulse to control some area of foreign land before another power could get to it. This is not to preclude economic motives (cf. Sweezy, 1967), but to question their primacy. It is notable that most of America's surplus goods and capital are disposed of in Europe, Canada and Australasia rather than in the Third World.

Irrespective of national motives or individual culpability, however, the simple fact remains: hundreds upon hundreds of "experts" in education, some describing themselves as comparative and/or international educationists, have been working in the field as teachers, consultants, researchers, advisers and planners. Many of these "experts" fall into Campbell's (1973:72) over-advocacy trap--that is, they give advice or "solve" problems with an assurance quite out of keeping with the scientific status of the subject, and to exacerbate the situation they often fail to be interested in finding out what happens when their advice is followed. Campbell's "cop-out" statement that the job of what he calls "the methodologist" for the experimenting society is not to say what is to be done, but rather to say what has been done, thus giving "neutral" advice to the decision-making politicians, is unrealistic. But for those functioning as comparative or international educationists perhaps it should be equally unacceptable to espouse as their main goals such objectives as: (i) the production of an East-West synthesized value system (in which "superior" Western values remain dominant); (ii) the production of leaders and skilled workers; (iii) the orderly dissemination and assimilation of attitudes which will assist in the "development" process; (iv) the training of specialists (e.g., educational planners) in the wealthy Western nations who

are able to impart Western techniques; (v) the provision of consultancy services (often through which the concentrated services of a university can be used to grapple with specific "development" problems); and so on. This is not to claim that these goals are not important for "developing" countries, but simply to point out that they tend to be assumed by the West rather than analyzed or defended, "allowing unsupported biases to slip undetected into 'descriptive' research. The implied prescriptions are often incomplete, inconsistent and misused. Examples. . .are the goals of development and, more particularly, educational development" (Hopkins, 1973:299). In providing unqualified support for the conventional Western theories and techniques of development, even with the best intentions, we tend to perpetuate dependency and exploitative relationships.

Smart (1971) points out that activities such as those implied by the above goals are pursued and found acceptable in terms of prevailing views of history ("the signs of the times"), views of societal development ("how societies change"), and views about the best means to obtain peace. They have little to do with education per se, and it is inevitable that anyone putting forward notions about the hows and whys of education in Third World countries particularly--who shall be educated and to what level, what shall be the content of education, how the schools shall be run, how they shall be financed, etc.--does so in the context of views about the nature of man, the nature of society and the nature of knowledge, embracing all the so-called goals, which are as likely as not inappropriate in a given context.

The point is that this situation has arisen to a significant extent because professional activity in the international field has long outstripped the academic base of the subject--the development of systematic and interwoven (mutually interdependent) conceptual, theoretical and data

foundations. Funding considerations and activities of questionable validity, rather than scholarly concern for the "state of the art" have shaped the viability and profitability of one kind of activity as against another, and have thereby shaped and directed the total enterprise of international and possibly comparative education. The quest for soft moneys to initiate and develop strong international programs, and the continuing campaign to get them institutionalized (in the hard money sense), suggests that the programs have had to be designed in such a way as to appeal to possible funding agencies, rather than in terms of intellectual integrity, or out of concern for the development of the discipline.

It seems necessary, at this point, to rehearse the distinction between "comparative education" and "international education."[3] Since much of my paper implicitly addresses this point, I do not intend to labour it. I would suggest, however, that the differences between "comparative," "cross-national,"

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[3] At the outset of this discussion it should be established that I do not intend drawing an explicit distinction for the present purpose between "comparative" and "area" studies, or between "qualitative" and "quantitative" approaches. Insofar as much of the debate on this point has been 'political,' I concur with Holmes (1972:216):

> A good deal of manifest and latent disagreement among comparative educationists would be dissipated if agreement could be reached on what elements are common to the natural and social sciences. Then it would be clear that several types of investigation contribute to the growth of comparative education. There is room for research limited to problem analysis and comparison. Research based upon statistical techniques contribute to our knowledge of institutional relationships. Area studies should aim at building up data banks of systematically collected, comparable statistical and descriptive information. Case studies should improve techniques of prediction, testing and explanation. . . It is evident that explanation, prediction and testing are all facets of scientific enquiry.

"cross-cultural," "international" and "development" education should be delineated by a professional body such as the Comparative and International Education Society, because although the problem has been approached many times in the literature, it has never been put to rest. The tripartite distinction of Bereday (1967:180), which establishes comparative education as "efforts to set together systems of educational phenomena arrested in point of time, or time sequences or sets of events or trends" (i.e., as static); development education as concerned with its dynamics, "not being bound so rigorously by rules of comparison, but concerned instead with modes of action or making educational policy more intelligent and immediate;" and international education as concerned with the "dynamics of interaction between cultures and countries rather than with the interdependence of schools and other social institutions," given some obvious shortcomings, is a reasonable rule of thumb. The four types of work characteristic of the "international co-operation" (Noah and Eckstein, 1969:34-39) phase of comparative education development provide a framework for reviewing Bereday's distinctions, but do not clarify them.

There are considerable dangers in institutionalizing such distinctions--such as attempts to establish a hierarchy of respectability--but notwithstanding the kinds of professional jealousy or sporadic relapses into the various quasi-ideological cocoons and scholarly squabbles which unfortunately characterize most of the academic community, it seems that if we are to be able to identify ourselves in "specialist" terms, it is important that we should move in this direction. I shall return to this point.

It is apparent to this observer that the field of international and development education may be in imminent danger of becoming moribund, unable by its present methods and principles to continue its work meaningfully.

The field has reached this unhappy state of affairs by inveterate and unexamined reliance on theory. The problem is not that theory per se is inappropriate, but that the theories and methodologies extant are inadequate to the task which the field sets them. Many alleged theories of educational phenomena are, after all, little more than a specialized vocabulary for description, resulting from atheoretic approaches to theory development in which the emphasis is placed on gathering "facts" and subjecting them to various analytical routines to determine their interrelationships.

This is not to suggest that the enterprise of international and development education should be terminated, but that they may require new and more effective principles and methods, possibly directed from the theoretical to the practical, the quasi-practical and to the eclectic. I am employing the term "eclectic" in the sense indicated by Schwab (1969:2)--the arts by which unsystematic, uneasy, but usable focus on a body of problems is effected among diverse theories, each relevant to the problem in a different way. "Practical" does not refer to what Schwab (1969:1) calls "the curbstone practicality of the man in the street," but to a complex discipline, perhaps relatively unfamiliar to the academic and differing radically from the disciplines of the theoretic.[4]

In addition, the "feeder" discipline of comparative education should stimulate the development and refinement of prescriptions in international and development education. In this sense, international and development education is the discipline concerned with choice and action, its methods leading to defensible decisions, in contrast to comparative education, the theoretic,

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[4] It may be significant that the "reconceptualization function" assigned to the International Education Project of A.C.E. includes an examination of "the validity of traditional approaches to international education" (International Action, December, 1973:1).

which is concerned with knowledge leading to warranted conclusions.[5] Fischer is, in a sense, implying the same point when he argues that:

> . . .comparative methodologies and meaningful cross-cultural comparisons have not emerged and are not likely to be produced from professional and practical education. The academic social sciences, on the other hand, have a natural interest in defining and testing comparison. (Fischer, 1970:14).

Although much comparative education research emerges from and should feed back into professional and practical education, the widespread failure to 'follow-through' at the critical point--i.e., at the point of actually comparing--has left the discipline to some extent in limbo:

> . . .insofar as investigators actually prefer the by-products of quanta of information or concept validation to the main goal of explanation, they are settling for second best. (Noah and Eckstein, 1969:187).

In this connection, however, I am not prepared to agree with Laska (1973) in expressing apprehension about the future, or to be misled into thinking there are "questions much more basic than methodology" (p. 295).[6] Robert Cowen

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[5] I am not sure that "comparative" and "international" specialists are necessarily different people, but I think that conceptually, at least, it is important for one to know which hat one is wearing at any given time.

[6] Laska does not appear to recognize that the questions to which he addresses himself--as to whether comparative education is a professional or an academic (scholarly) field; whether it constitutes an independent academic field or a dependent one (having just decided that it is not an academic field at all, but a professional one); and whether, as a dependent field (the obvious response to the previous question), on which academic (read "respectable"?) field is it dependent?--are very largely contingent upon the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the enterprise. And it does strike me as inconsistent that, having dismissed comparative studies of education as dependent, Laska then labels "foundations of education" as a "discipline", when, by the criteria he employed to 'torpedo' comparative education, foundations are clearly equally dependent, and for that reason create, at best, a sub-discipline, or more accurately, a branch of many disciplines forming a composite around the given focus on education as an institution.

warns me that "the word methodology parks off a few too many reverberations,"[7] but it now appears (Edwards, et. al., 1973) that much of the acrimony is leaving the traditional debate. Certainly, to take Barber's point, better data and more imaginative theory are also extremely important, and we should not view "progress" in research as a reflection of increasing methodological rigor alone (Barber, 1972:425), but I am inclined to believe that the identity crisis people are so concerned about is, at bottom, a crisis of methodology. Most studies in the comparative field tend to stand or fall on one or both of two counts: content (whether what we compare is 'significant') and methodology, and most of those which fall do so in terms of methodological critique.

While comparative education does not have the elements of a public paradigm on the Kuhn model, there are perhaps possibilities for a quasi-paradigm developed around a set of dimensions such as those suggested by Holt and Richardson (1970:59) indicating the rules of interpretation, the puzzle defining aspects, criteria of admissability, the ontological-predictive element and the conceptual and theoretical elements. Clearly, methodological issues can never be resolved unless there is a close articulation between theory building and methodology.

Sensitivity to the concerns of Laska (1973), Fletcher (1974) and Barber (1972), who enjoin us to "address ourselves to questions much more basic than methodology," to give up "the quest for the Holy Grail of independent discipline," and to give less credence to the "legitimizing power of the term science," respectively, is not likely to alter the trend towards these objectives.

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[7] I should here acknowledge the stimulus I have received from lengthy correspondence in which Robert Cowen and I have engaged. Some of the points raised in this paper were first explored in our hasty notes, and where there is a neat turn of phrase it could well be his.

It is arguable whether any comparative field of study comprises a separate academic discipline, and personally, I am not especially concerned whether comparative education is recognized as a "science" or a "discipline" or not, in the ex ante sense: the proof of the pudding. . . .It is the art of comparison we are trying to scientize.

Barber's excellent critique of "methodologism" in the social sciences, indicating that we are deluding ourselves if we believe that "reliability, precision and certitude can be attained by the application of specified techniques" (p. 425), and asking:

> . . .why must aspiring social scientists insist on imitating natural scientists when they themselves share no common methodology? (p. 425)

is well taken. However, Barber implies an opposite view of science to that embraced by many philosophers of science and social science alike (e.g., Popper, 1969, Ruse, 1973). While this is an area of considerable controversy there is much support for the thesis that there is a unity of method in the sciences and, given this point, that in the discovery and development of new theories, scientists themselves frequently draw analogically upon methodologies and theories in already explored fields of inquiry.[8] There is no assumption that there are no differences between theoretical and applied sciences, or between the social sciences. Social scientists have to deal with open (multiple parameter) systems, in which interactions between components are complex and "over-perturbed" compared with relatively simple and closed physical systems:

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[8] An excellent article by Ruse (1973) demonstrates this point not by drawing on a few hackneyed examples from the physical sciences, but by considering the relationship between social and biological sciences (cf. the way in which Malthus' theory of population served as a model for Darwin's theory of evolution). This confirms Ruse's argument in earlier work that there are fundamental similarities between all kinds of scientific investigation and theorizing.

> In the social sciences it is less easy than in the natural sciences to classify data on the basis of sense impressions. Perhaps only individual behaviour can be directly observed. Empirical evidence is mediated by a complex system of theoretical constraints, classificatory frameworks and measuring techniques. . .Distinctions drawn in the social sciences between types of data are intellectual. Logical procedures and methods of investigation are imposed. Neither phenomenalism nor instrumentalism are as acceptable in the social as in the natural sciences. (Holmes, 1972:217)

Barber's intimation that we are seeking "certitude" and the implication that only natural scientists have a glimpse of such a thing, is to accuse social scientists of upholding a pre-relativity view of science. Barber is surely aware that no law, whether relating to society or physics, can ever be absolutely and positively verified, and will always be contingent upon the initial conditions from which it derives. Any such law can be refuted or falsified and therefore continuous testing is important if we are to know when to modify or abandon a law.[9] This is not to argue that a law is not a law, especially in view of the premise of "tolerance," or the premise of "causality within the limits of error," or even the premise of "statistical probabilities of events--a dynamic view of causation" (cf. Capek, 1964), but to this extent, Barber's (1972) critique of the position of Noah and Eckstein (1969) and, by implication, Holmes (1965; 1972), is misguided (cf. Martin, 1972).

Noah and Eckstein and Holmes would probably agree with Barber's reservations about the inductive approach,[10] which applies rather more to Bereday's

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9 Albert Einstein reputedly said to someone who congratulated him on his work, "All the experiments in the world cannot prove me right. Just one might prove me wrong."

10 Noah and Eckstein are again challenged by Barber (1972:426) who writes that the problem of any inductive approach, as "the critical process by which we get from the isolated instance in the perceptual world to the general law-like ("causal") propositions of the theoretical world, is itself an a priori principle whose legitimacy can never be demonstrated in empirical (a posteriori) terms." Noah and Eckstein were themselves very cautious about making unjustified claims for their modified inductivism.

work of the mid-1960s than to any of these other writers, and Holmes himself has explored the significance of conceptual differences between his hypothetico-deductive approach and the hypothetico-inductive approach of Noah and Eckstein (cf. Holmes, 1972). What emerges is considerable agreement about the aims of comparative education in terms of its being able to contribute to a theoretical understanding of education and to its planned development. While there remains some dispute about "the constituents of understanding and the theoretical assumptions on which techniques are based" (Holmes, 1972:205), we welcome "the functional relationship studies undertaken with the help of quantitative measures and statistical modes of analyzing data [which] have improved the image of comparative education and contributed to its growth." (p. 209)

Whether or not comparative education as a special field of inquiry can be built into a rigorous scientific discipline, as Holmes and Noah and Eckstein maintain, is an open question. But the image is important in terms of the identity crisis mentioned above.

Foster somewhere argues that comparative education is really comparative sociology of education. It seems to be coming to the point where we must look at education as an institution (like government) which even if it does not constitute a separate academic discipline (cf. Laska, 1973), can be usefully studied by social sciences such as psychology, economics and anthropology as well as sociology (all of which will be deployed in a "professional" or "applied" sense for certain purposes) and particularly from our point of view, by the comparative branches of those disciplines. Regretfully, the day of the talented academic who could embody the skills of half a dozen basic disciplines is past. Indeed, the ultimate interdisciplinarian was rejected by science 150 years ago when the Australian platypus, that most integrated (yet theoretically dysfunctional in all its components) of all mammals, birds, reptiles and

marsupials, was treated as a joke, the work of some diabolically clever Antipodean taxidermist, by the Royal Academy in London. (Perhaps this is the real problem: we need a herd of platypi rather than a Royal Academy!).

Since the real interdisciplinarian is long dead, however, we must recognize ourselves for what we are: narrow specialists cutting off thinner and thinner slices of the scholarly cake for deeper and deeper examination. And, of course, it still gives us indigestion! Given my elaboration of Foster's point and the nature of the job market, I suspect that the emphasis on the skills and interests of the individual may alter to become even more specific, so that one becomes 'a scholar in higher education, working chiefly within a comparative framework.'

Furthermore, it seems possible, as a result of the so-called identity crisis, that many young scholars who do now, or soon might have called themselves comparative educationists will drop that label (if they fear it does not tell them or anybody else who they are) and they will merge into departments of higher education, curriculum, administration etc., where they will use their comparative skills very effectively. I'm not sure about this--my job is not on the line (in the American market at least) so I do not get such strong "vibrations," but perhaps this sort of development is an almost inevitable result of the psychology and sociology of job seeking in a tight market. Much probably depends on what happens in and to social foundations departments, but there seems to be a discernible if imprecise trend in the direction I have indicated.

What is particularly significant for our future is that professional security in the rapid expansion experienced here in the post war period is one thing; but when the fundamental interest is in the preservation of that security--and people do not really know which way to turn to play safe--the development of comparative education (not even as a science or a discipline so much as a

"distinctive" field) will become equated with the preservation of professional security, and nothing seems more certain to assure atrophy, or at least temporary paralysis.

It appears to me that the legitimacy gap at the heart of this problem cannot be solved by modelling ourselves upon a discipline such as geography (cf. Fletcher, 1974), which does rely on controlled, systematic, comparative analysis, but in which there is reliance upon knowing with a fairly high degree of certainty when you have discovered a "universally occurring" feature. This is a lot more simple (in the sense of being able to generate agreement within the current professional paradigm) in systematic geography than doing the same thing in education which still, despite what someone calls the ahumanness of the discipline, deals chiefly with people, aggregatively and in groups, and with the interactions between them. To argue that comparative education "constitutes a geography of education. . .[and that we cannot afford to] ignore the accumulated discussion by geographers of fundamental methodological problems" (Fletcher, 1974:353), is to ask us to borrow from yet another discipline.

We do have a lot to learn from those disciplines which are grappling with the same basic problems we are--and notably the problem of <u>comparison</u> or <u>cross-cultural</u> research (cf. comparative politics, comparative sociology, comparative economics, cross-cultural psychology, etc.). But we also have something(s) to teach them and <u>dialogue</u> is more important than <u>borrowing</u> <u>per se</u> (although one should result in the other). As Fischer (1970:vii) maintains:

> The present popularity and potentialities of comparative research are to some degree a reflection of the advances. . .toward integrative social science.

The dialogue is already underway--if tenuously--and it is of critical importance that comparative education should be actively engaged in it, and <u>without any feeling of inferiority</u>. In the first place, our sister disciplines

are just as chaotic as we are, and are no nearer the so-called theoretical and methodological breakthroughs that we all seem to hope for but which are, of course, very unlikely in this age of incremental expansion. Secondly, comparative education is quite highly regarded. Rokkan, et. al. (1969:47), for example, refer to "educational scientists" (p. 47) after demonstrating our (one?) highly visible achievement:

> Significantly some of the first initiatives came from American scholars and were backed by American funds. Europe initiated and Europe financed studies have so far been few and far between. Perhaps the happiest example of a jointly financed and co-operatively planned international study is the [I.E.A. Project]: this was planned at the UNESCO Institute of Education in Hamburg, and financed by the U.S. Office of Education (for the international costs of the project) and by national funding agencies in the [various] countries (for the field operations). This project constitutes a model of international academic co-operation: it shows that it is possible to achieve solid results through the sharing of responsibilities across many national teams and it shows how UNESCO and other international bodies can perform an important brokerage function in linking up American and European initiatives. (Rokkan, et. al., 1969:46)[11]

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[11] Of course, I would be the last to pose questions about I.E.A., the answers to which might reflect poorly upon the comparative education community at large--e.g., apart from a few "heavies", who largely devised and coordinated the project, how many of the people involved are "comparative educationists?" My observations indicate very few. Most have been statisticians, psychometricians, educational psychologists, subject-specialists, etc. (It is possible now, however, that comparativists will use the data to advantage.) Second, how do you feed a habit like that? (C. Arnold Anderson, in conversation estimated the international costs of I.E.A. to be in the region of $7 million.) At a recent conference (Western States Comparative and International Society Conference, Snowbird, Utah, October 17-19, 1974), Dr. R. Neville Postlethwaite described the I.E.A. study as "the advent of large scale empirical studies" in comparative education. That may well be true, and it would certainly make work for a lot of people, but there are some big questions to be asked before we become too enthusiastic about launching ourselves in that direction. Many of these questions are implicitly and explicitly addressed throughout this paper, but tie up particularly with Holmes' (1972) critique of empiricism, and to the problem of how we get logically from broad theoretical formulations to indicated empirical research. Masses of data have been collected in education. We seem to have counted almost everything we can count, and a lot of things we can't. But much of this data is interlaced either with generally contested assumptions or with unidentified and often unrecognized normative judgments (cf. Fischer, 1970:4).

The important thing which emerges from all this is that irrespective of what aspect of social research we devote ourselves to, the consuming interest which should and can bridge the gap is comparison, which is far more than a tool of our trade: it is a way of life. The comparative exercise is not an end in itself--the ultimate problem is still to contribute to the explanation of one's own society, and:

> . . .in the last analysis comparative method and theory has little point unless it is directed at specific societal contours. Although there is some advantage in creating comparative models which investigate a number of issues cross-nationally, the ultimate advantage of comparison is that it should generate a dialectic between the particular and the general. (Davies, 1970:133)

Our distinctive quality will emerge from the level of success we can achieve "not [in] imitating other (less complex) sciences or [in developing] explanations consisting of generalizations from other disciplines, but [in choosing] to focus on complex problems and issues that have been neglected or are simply beyond the explanatory power of related fields." (Barber, 1972:430-31).

While I have emphasized the importance of methodology for the balanced development of the field, I would also stress that method should not be permitted to delimit social theory. It is possible for the two to be quite distinct. Popper, for example, admits:

> . . .it is a fact that my own social theory, which favours gradual and piecemeal reform, strongly contrasts with my theory of method, which happens to be a theory of scientific and intellectual revolution. (Popper, 1970:255).

Insofar as the advocates of quantitative approaches to comparative education are seeking to minimize the conditionalism of our theories by seeking to render theories as closer approximations of universal statements about education, in the process a certain reification inevitably occurs. The form of education

systems becomes 'certitude,' and measures can be devised to deal with particular approximations. The danger, however, lies in accepting the institution as 'natural' without considering the prior questions relating to social structures. I would not describe Holmes' and Noah and Eckstein's views of science and method as necessarily positivistic, but they are social positivists. They accept the institution as a fact, and predictability is in terms of institutional goals, irrespective of whether the goals themselves are valid.

This question is at the heart of the Popper-Adorno debate (see Adorno, 1969; Popper, 1970), which is extremely significant for all the social sciences. Whereas Popper suggests that social scientists should concern themselves solely with specific 'problems'--a 'problem' being something basically epistemological--for Adorno a 'problem' is something practical, in the final instance entirely a problematic condition of the world, and Adorno maintains that methods rest on the facts studied. Popper, on the other hand insists that once a specific problem has been selected the primacy of the methodology is established.

The question of content, of what are the appropriate fields and problems for comparative analysis, is extremely difficult to answer. From the mid-fifties there was a continuous ferment of plans, designs and schemes for cross-cultural and cross-national data gathering and data analysis, some of which generated useful bodies of data and led to interesting analytical innovations. We became increasingly aware of the limitations of single-site studies, and increasingly convinced of the methodological rationale and the theoretical pay-off of cross-national and cross-cultural research. As Husén points out, however, we are confronted with a dilemma:

> Over the past few decades (research) has amassed a vast amount of descriptive material, yet a mere handful of generally valid conclusions have been produced from this abundance. It has come up with some very useful findings on the 'ambience' of education, for

> example, in matters relating to scholastic aptitude, achievements and social background, but has a meagre record of performance on the central issue, i.e., the teaching and learning process in the classroom itself. (Husén, 1974:119).

Davies (1970:1) reflects that "one of the curiosities of work in the social sciences, as in science, is that the focus of research tends to concentrate on partial areas of immediate concern which in turn come to be defined as the whole field." It is apparent that this sort of trend in comparative education defines "fashionable" research. Kazamias (1972) has reacted to this limitation by calling for comparativists to pay more attention to the field of pedagogy.

In the U.S. tradition of comparative educational studies (as distinct from the European--cf. Max Planck Institut, etc.--where the emphasis has been if not fundamentally different, then at least more inclusive), pedagogy (essentially the study of who teaches what, and how, and to whom) and such concerns have been largely ignored and concentration has tended toward the functional relationships of the school and society and the function of education as a tool of political and economic development. Fischer (1970:4) maintains that "pedagogy and psychology have dominated educational research to the point of diminishing returns," and while this may be true of education generally, Husén's point that we still know relatively little about either the learning process or what goes on in schools, stands.

It seems clear that this is one area in which comparative approaches could shed much useful light (cf. King, et. al., 1974). Kelly (1975) argues convincingly that most of us are engaged in "top-down" research. That is, we have concentrated on the functions of institutions vis-a-vis the social vacuums they are supposed to fill, rather than on what goes on inside schools. It seems surprising that this approach has remained so strongly entrenched in the face

of twenty years or more of criticism of structural-functionalism (cf. particularly, among recent critiques, Rex [1961], who refutes the biologic structures analogy upon which much functional theory rests, and Demereth and Petersen [1967], who offer a critique on a wide range of issues.) Again, Kelly makes the point that as long as the biological analogy establishes the quasi-paradigm, we are held to the examination of systems-maintenance patterns--how the parts function, or are dysfunctional--because all else is ipso facto irrelevant.[12] The elaboration of structuralist-functionalist thought, by assuming the organic unity of society and its institutions, has led comparative education away from study of the schools and instead of asking what education in schools is about, it asks what schools do for society. The first would appear prior to the second, but the field has floundered about on the second, avoiding or assuming the first. It is apparent that the influences of positivism, instrumentalism and empiricism explain this traditional stance, which I think should be revised.

I would be the first to agree, however, that we cannot go on delineating more and more tasks for comparative education to cope with. Coming to grips with Freeman Butts' "four interrelated worlds of discourse" (1973: 289-294) alone would be more than the field could cope with. In terms of thinking generated by critical social theory, however, the second of Butts' questions, which is also taken up by Henry Wagschall (1974), seems a concern of considerable importance:

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12 Barber (1972:435) adds perceptively that functionalism is a prime paradigm among aspiring social scientists; but "functionalism is pervaded by instrumental values such as stability (homeostasis) and efficiency ('good functioning' per se) that give it a static and politically conservative character" in which radical change can be interpreted only in terms of systemic breakdown.

> Is an educational system useful only in a modernizing society but no longer necessary in a modern society where the mass media can do a more effective job than the schools can? Or is it the other way around? In either case we need much more careful comparative analysis of the role of formal schooling in societies at various stages of development. (Butts, 1973:290).

Many writers (e.g., Davies, 1970; Freeman Butts, 1973; Fischer, 1970; Henry, 1960; Hopper, 1968; Laska, 1973; Kazamias, 1972; Noah, 1974; Noah and Eckstein, 1969; Smart, 1971; and Wagschall, 1974) have made positive and viable (if not always mutually agreeable) suggestions about useful directions for enquiry in comparative education. There is little point in cataloging them here. What does suggest itself, however, is the possibility that the Comparative and International Education Society should lend its support to an attempt to develop a thoroughgoing taxonomic catalogue of profitable areas for research of both a "workface" and a "back-up" kind.

Finally, one of the most disturbing trends evident in comparative education in recent years has been the utterly Northerncentric attempt to bridge the legitimacy gap through appeals to the literary imagination. Soon after Alice did her thing (Noah and Eckstein, 1969), Pooh and Piglet were 'cited' (pardon!) in hot pursuit of the ever-elusive Woozles and Wizzles (Kazamias and Schwartz, 1970). Since then, of course, we have been busy making faster our fast fish (Noah, 1974), not that it did Hemingway's Old Man any good, and trying to catch a few of the loose ones. To complete and balance up the picture of comparative education which has been conveyed by these efforts, I wish to introduce to the discussion two creatures well established in Australian literature (Wakefield, 1967). They both bear more-than-passing resemblance to many in our field.

> Bottersnikes are the laziest creatures, probably, in the whole world. They are too lazy to dig burrows, like rabbits, or to find hollow trees

> to live in as the small animals do, and would be horrified at the work of building nests, like birds. Bottersnikes find their homes readymade, in rubbish heaps.

But my very favorite creature, an eminently recognizable little guy, is the Gumble:

> Gumbles are little creatures who love to paddle in ponds (they can't actually swim) and are hopeless when they go all giggly.

There is probably not much we can do about our Bottersnikes in the short-term, but we should at least teach our Gumbles to swim.

CONCLUSION

I made it clear at the outset that this paper is conjectural and intuitive. What may appear as prescriptions should not be read as obiter dicta: I am quite open to persuasion on many of the points made. Neither do I think it appropriate for a visitor (even if he is a member) to suggest a "future" for the Comparative and International Education Society. While, in general, I am advocating that more attention should be paid to the academic base of comparative education, focused particularly upon a mutually interdependent development of the conceptual, theoretical, methodological and data underpinnings which may be directed towards a range of issues (including the teaching-learning process), and within which there would be room for a wide range of activities, this is partly in pursuit of a more clearly defined goal and "authenticated" approach. There are undoubtedly many other ways of coming at this objective.

One thing, though is perfectly clear. The future of the Comparative and International Education Society--the directions it takes, the causes it espouses, the "paradigm" it tacitly approves, the members it admits and, above all, its pulse--will largely determine the future of comparative and international

education throughout the world. The U.S. and European "traditions" in comparative and international education are interdependent, and the future of comparative and international educationists everywhere will depend largely upon the decisions taken in this Society. All the wisdom we have managed to accumulate in our short history and all the rationality and tolerance borne of the best scholarly tradition will be required to make the appropriate decisions. If we can approach our task with a consistent display of these qualities, then comparative and international education has (have?) indeed matured.

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